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ABSTRACT

An international perspective is the new reality for all U.S. interests, including education, and it was on the basis of this belief that the Education Commission of the States (ECS) held the joint conference with the Australian Education Council (AEC) reported in this document. An initial section called "Points to Ponder" raises questions as to why U.S. educators do things the way they do and what they might conclude about U.S. education through participation in international exchange. The next section, "Common Themes," points out that Australian and U.S. educators share mutual interests, pursue similar goals, and face similar obstacles. However, vast differences in political structure, practice, and behavior limit true understanding and make it difficult to implement in one country what appears to work well in another. The section called "Shared Visions" delineates three broad agenda items for education that conference participants agreed each country must find its own ways and means of addressing. Quotes from various participants are included under the heading, "What Did We Learn about Ourselves?" and this is followed by "Afterthoughts from an American Delegate," which contains observations of one U.S. delegate who remained after the conference to visit public schools and a university. An evaluation of the U.S. delegates performance is contained in a concluding section called "Nature of Meetings." Ten supplemental materials of interest follow the report. These include newspaper clippings, press releases from the chairman of AEC, journal articles, and a report on follow-up activities between AEC and ECS. (JB)

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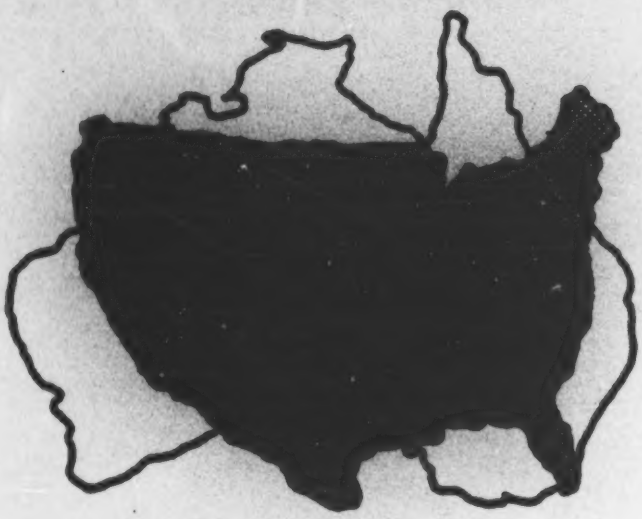

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We shall not cease from exploration
And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time.

T.S. Eliot

THROUGH OTHER EYES

July 1987

No. GP-87-1

Education Commission of the States
1860 Lincoln Street, Suite 300
Denver, Colorado 80295

Order copies of this book at $4.00 each from the ECS Distribution Center, 1860 Lincoln, Suite 300, Denver, Colorado 80295, 303-830-3692.

The Education Commission of the States is a nonprofit, nationwide compact formed in 1965 to help governors, state legislators, state education officials and others develop policies to improve the quality of education. Forty-eight states, the District of Columbia, American Samoa, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands are members. Offices are in Denver, Colorado, and Washington, D.C.

It is the policy of the Education Commission of the States to take affirmative action to prevent discrimination in its policies, programs and employment practices.

Adolph Coors Company
Brewing Division
Golden, Colorado 80401

August 19, 1987

Dr. Frank Newman, President
Education Commission of the States
1860 Lincoln Street, Suite 300
Denver, CO 80295

Dear Dr. Newman:

Americans who traveled to Australia to participate in a cultural exchange, it seems, took part in a harvest of education-related information. This report is replete with exchanges that cannot but aid in the ultimate improvement of both educational systems.

The peoples of the world charged with responsibilites for educating future generations, keeping pace with divergent economies and political systems and staying abreast of "high tech," are faced with a formidable challenge. They are challenged to evaluate and examine ways to improve systems and methodology. They are challenged to coordinate time and energy with the industrial community, to design cooperative programs with business, and to do all this on a global scale.

As the world shrinks, education, it would seem, must move from traditional incremental changes to more sweeping transformations if it is to keep pace. Today's advancing technology demands quicker turnaround than what has been historically true. What the Americans and the Australians have done is to blaze a trail for future deliberations. The blending of a wide spectrum of national interests with educational goals can be the catalyst for improved international relations.

At Adolph Coors Company, we apply our resources to generate interest in education, to support innovative programs, and to reward creativity. We are pleased to provide for the printing of this report and trust that it will inspire the reader to loftier goals in education.

Sincerely,

ADOLPH COORS COMPANY

Samuel R. Martinez

SRM/cj

FOREWORD

We went to Australia to gain a new perspective on American education. We put that new perspective to work on the way back home during an eight-hour layover in Hawaii.

Unique among the states, Hawaii is the only U.S. state in which all local schools report directly to the chief state school officer. There are no local school districts, no local school boards or superintendents. The advantages and limits to this kind of heavily centralized structure were all the more clear to us having just participated in a discussion on federal-state relations and several related topics with members of the Australian Education Council.

Like Hawaii, all public schools in Australia's six states and two territories report directly to the office of the director-general, the equivalent to a state schools superintendent in the remaining 49 states here. Hawaii, we found, has even more in common with New Zealand, a single nation-state comprising two islands.

Our Hawaiian layover proved instructive in an anecdotal way as well. Just prior to a meeting with Governor John Waihee and ECS commissioners — state schools Superintendent Charles Toguchi, Senator Norman Mizuguchi, Representative Rod Tam and professor John Thompson — the governor's education aide, Joseph Lapilio, showed us a piece of old ECS letterhead. Our graphic logo at that time was a world globe.

ECS is now taking on a new international perspective. We are not changing the image on our present letterhead — an outline map of the United States and territories. But we are changing our image as an inward-looking organization concerned only with the development of education policies as they relate to the individual states that will put them into practice.

We are changing because an international perspective is the new reality for all American interests. ECS must take the lead, not in becoming expert on the school systems of Australia, Japan, Canada or any other nation, but in gaining a new understanding of how we can better look at and better improve our own lot.

This document is conceived as an evolving manuscript for distribution to senior education policy makers, governors, key legislative leaders and others with an interest in analyzing the benefits of international exchange and comparison. Its distribution is made possible by some well-directed dollars from the Adolph Coors Company of Golden, Colorado.

It is only the first of several more such publications we envision, looking at American education "through other eyes." We need the wisdom of your experience in international exchange, and we invite you to take an active hand in shaping the future of this document and the future of this new ECS perspective.

Prepared by the Education Commission of the States
Frank Newman, President
Patrick McQuaid, Senior Projects Editor

POINTS TO PONDER

What can Americans conclude about American education through participation in international exchange? Consider the following:

- There are no local school districts in Australia. All public schools report directly to the office of the director-general, the equivalent of a chief state school officer. Reforms could be more easily implemented than in the United States, but at the expense of local, participatory governance.

- There have been no private colleges or universities in Australia (though a resort developer is planning to start one). While all are state institutions, increased federal funding since the 1970s has brought a struggle for control of higher education. Funding and control are not matched, suggesting that there are greater benefits to our system of joint and mixed funding than previously thought.

- Since the 1970s, enrollment in private elementary and secondary education in Australia has steadily increased and now stands at 25%. Public funds for private education remains a contentious issue, especially because private school graduates are disproportionally overrepresented in higher education enrollments.

- A tight economy will likely mean higher retention and completion rates for Australian education. Meanwhile, only 47% of students stay on to finish high school after age 15. Most move into the labor market. How well equipped is Australia's young work force for a future of rapid technological advancement?

- Australian educators are astounded to learn of business and school partnerships, adopt-a-school schemes and the overall level of industry involvement with American education. "Your business representatives sound just like your education representatives," one Australian commented.

These points raise questions as to "why we do things the way we do." What can Americans do to capitalize on our strengths — all the more evident through international dialogue — and compensate for our structural weaknesses?

COMMON THEMES

"Despite differences in our educational systems, we share similar goals and aspirations and a variety of similar problems. This seminar is surely going to increase understanding, one of the other, and if nothing else, will raise questions for each of us about our own system and why we do things the way we do."

- **Sir Ninian Stephen,**
  Governor-General, Commonwealth of Australia
  Welcoming address to conference participants

Common themes are entwined throughout the histories of American and Australian education philosophy and practice. From colonial origins, through early experimentation with democratic and participatory governance, through the growth of industrial sectors and now with the prospects of a postindustrial, information age, "change" and the pursuit of excellence remain common elements in the topography of learning for both Australia and the United States.

American schooling took a new direction in 1918 with the adoption of "Cardinal Principles," stressing utility and "the application of knowledge to the activities of life." The goal then was to nurture a skilled, productive work force and the theme dominating education reform was "relevance." Sixty-nine years later, the discussion swirls around such phrases as "economic development" and "international competition."

When the Australian Education Council (AEC) first convened in 1936, education ministers for each state and territory, as well as the commonwealth government, met "to discuss how technical education could be improved so as to decrease youth unemployment." Fifty-one years later, this concern was again a feature of the Australian education agenda when the AEC held its inaugural joint conference with the Education Commission of the States (ECS).*

Education in Australia is now at a crossroads and the rapid growth of an information society poses critical questions for the future. "What kind of postindustrial society will we choose?" asks the Commonwealth Schools Commission in a discussion paper entitled, "Making the Future: The Role of Secondary Education in Australia."

The operative word is "choose."

"There's nothing like an outside, overseas expert to make you take your own situation seriously," remarked an education official from the Australian Northern Territory. We found that the traffic in ideas runs two ways. Some understanding of the nature of Australian education and how Australians are confronting various aspects of changing

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*Conference participants included a 15-member delegation of Americans on behalf of ECS, officials and staff with the AEC — including associate members from New Zealand and Papua New Guinea — and 16 invited guests representing diverse business, education and labor interests in Australia.

need and demand provide Americans with a unique, new reference point for examining our own situation.

Australia has slowly come to face the fact that its cultural and economic position in the Pacific has changed. Increasingly a multicultural society, Australians now realize that while links with Europe and North America have deep social and cultural origins, their future is intrinsically tied through immigration, trade and foreign policy with Asia and the Pacific Basin.

In many respects, the education reform movement is just getting under way in Australia, and Australians are eager to learn from American trial and error. In many other respects, however, Australians are asking themselves many of the critical questions that Americans are only now confronting — now, during our celebrated "second wave" of reform.

Australians are carefully exploring issues of equity and quality. There are no local school districts in Australia. Primary and secondary schooling is basically under direct state control. Higher education, due to financial arrangements, is under federal — or commonwealth — authority. Meanwhile, there is growing interest in decentralizing and condensing a system in which tight central management and expansion have been the standard for more than a century. Australians are asking how they can best direct support — in an era of declining resources, enrollments and confidence in education and institutions in general — to foster sufficient flexibility in education that will respond to changing needs and encourage new school leadership.

What did we learn from these meetings? Beyond confirming that Australians and Americans do share mutual interests, pursue similar goals and face similar obstacles, participants learned how other nations perceive and manage education in light of unique national needs, circumstances and structures. In doing so, we reflected on — as the Australian governor-general put it — "why we do things the way we do." We also learned that vast differences in political structure, practice and behavior limit our capacity to truly understand one another or implement in one country what appears to work well in another.

Australians are convinced, for example, that due to heavy involvement of labor interests, many American-spun reforms — such as teacher career-ladder schemes — would prove unrealistic and fruitless for them to attempt.

The governor-general also observed that, while "it's a very daunting task for a layman to be asked to address a roomful of experts on the subject of their own expertise, like the weather, everyone has an opinion on education . . . and the less expert they are, the more emphatic they tend to be."

Discussion among Americans and with Australians was characterized by a wide array of emphatic, though well-informed opinion. There was disagreement among the American delegation, not only on the whys of American education but also on the hows of our diverse administrative operations. Former Tennessee Governor Lamar Alexander, in introducing the U.S. party, warned our hosts "to expect a variety of different views from the Americans." The delegation did not let them down — nor did the Australians settle into one harmonious voice.

To the American observer, the Australian political landscape is what Australian author Hugh Collins has called "a curious mixture of the familiar and the foreign." Aside from a shared federal-state authority, a two-chambered national legislature elected by state and

district constituencies, Australia operates under cabinet governance with a highly disciplined system of party allegiance. Australian governance is regulated not only by "constant parliamentary confrontation between government and opposition, but also in the internal operation of the party machines . . . and a professional public bureaucracy, nominally neutral in the competition between political parties and somewhat insulated against immediate intrusions by the legislature."*

The taste and feel for this unique mix of Westminster and federal models surfaced during the first hour of the conference. Participants from every distinct sector of Australian education and governance — as well as geographic regions — engaged in parliamentary-style dialogue, often marked by the jocular thrust and parry of interstate rivalry and an undercurrent of innate tension between state and federal education ministries.

Under the parliamentary system, the ministers for various state departments and services are appointed by the ruling party from among elected legislators. Thus, Australians were interested to learn that when Irving Stolberg, speaker of the Connecticut House of Representatives, addressed the conference on developments in American federal-state relations, he did not speak on behalf of his governor, even though the two happen to be Democrats. Americans, on the other hand, found it unusual that Australians did not find it a necessary courtesy to acknowledge that the commonwealth minister for education, Senator Susan Ryan, was attending the conference. Governor Alexander interrupted proceedings to recognize Senator Ryan.

Lin Powell, minister of education for the state of Queensland and 1987 AEC chair, said that given the nature of Australian politics, he looked forward to meeting with elected state representatives and local school officials when he visits the United States this July to attend the annual ECS meeting in Denver.

"It certainly would be valuable, from my point of view and from my ministerial colleagues' points of view, if we were able to mix and spar perhaps with a few more of the elected representatives from the United States," he remarked. "Somebody whose job contract lasts until the next election often has a different perception of what needs to be done and what can be done than somebody who doesn't have that sort of constraint."

Throughout the conference it was noted that, while what Americans and Australians have in common allows us to talk with one another, our differences allow us to see ourselves in a new light. Points of tension among participating countries and individual delegates proved a valuable learning tool. The more participants disagreed — with their overseas colleagues and among one another — the more all seemed to learn — about each other's education systems and about their own.

Russell Marshall, minister of education for New Zealand, observed that it is uncanny how often we face the same problems and discuss the same solutions. At least four common elements surfaced and were noted during summary discussion.

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*"Political Ideology in Australia: The Distinctiveness of a Bethamite Society" (Daedalus, winter 1985).

- Participants from all four nations are well aware that these are and will continue to be demanding times. The competitive nature of the world has led to intense questioning about all levels of schooling, with a focus on more rigorous education and the realization that different kinds of skills will come to the forefront.

- Education is slow to change. How do we encourage education to change? We need to find new modes, new ways of doing things, participants agreed, new policies that encourage the process of constructive change within education. Discussion tends to focus too much on what we would like to happen and not enough on how we would go about encouraging a more flexible system or at least a more responsive one.

- We need to rethink the relationship of business and education. Two days of the conference addressed "the interface of education with industry, business and commerce." Participants from the education sector expressed fears of too much intervention or the wrong kind of business and school interaction that would subvert the integrity of education. On the other hand, representatives from business and industry expressed concerns that education is an inefficient enterprise. Both sectors did agree that they are presently too segregated in the pursuit of common goals.

- The establishment of better working relations is not limited to business and academe. Within education and education administration a need exists for more effective cooperative efforts — more sharing, more involvement among universities, the colleges and the schools. In both countries, participants agreed, there must be more cooperative relationships between federal and state governments.

A common theme emerging in education reform discussions in both Australia and America is leadership.

Ian Cathie, education minister for the state of Victoria, noted, "In Victoria we have reshaped the management structure of the ministry itself so that it reflects a range of cross-sectoral concerns in the development of a much more coherent policy.

"There are many positive outcomes of that closer intersectoral cooperation. We are amalgamating the accreditation boards of both TAFE (Technical and Further Education) and colleges of higher education. We are working on difficult and sensitive issues such as resource sharing between schools and Technical and Further Education. This could involve use of some of TAFE's specialist equipment and facilities for the technology components of the new upper-secondary certificate, which is awarded by the schools.

"I regard the understanding of key managers in each of the sectors of the ways in which their separate activities form part of a coherent whole to be one of the keys to success in Victoria. There is no interference with their independence, but there is close adherence to broad policy and goals.

"Because of the need for both excellent managers and for good communication right through to the classrooms, the balance between local control of an institution or school and the role of central administration will be crucial in any implementation of change."

SHARED VISIONS

"If the diverse courses continue to be taught in ways which leave students dependent and trained, rather than resourceful and educated, I would say that the reform is purely cosmetic."

- **Garth Boomer**
  Chair, Commonwealth Schools Commission
  Commonwealth of Australia

Once known as "the lucky country," Australia's luck is rapidly running out.

"We are no longer what we thought was a lucky country," said Bert Evans, national director of the Metal Trades Industry Association. "Those lucky days are behind us. International competition is a new god, at least a new god in Australia, and international competition means we have to attract better brains into industry."

Against rising debt and falling currency, Australians frequently refer to their dollar as "the peso" and their commonwealth, "a banana republic." Earlier in the year, Prime Minister Bob Hawke warned his once carefree countrymen, "The party's over — finito. And Australians have to understand it — finito."

But rarely in a parliamentary government does the prime minister have the last word. The Australians are a resilient people, accustomed to adversity, as the great inhospitable bulk of the interior would suggest. Ideologically, it is a nation committed to democracy with a national character rejecting the petty preoccupations of narrow self-interest.

"One thing I've learned from these discussions," an American remarked, "is that we have a large stake, not only in our being winners, but in your being winners. There are relatively few countries that can be counted on to be the cooperators of the world, to be the leaders in the sense that you want something more than narrow self-success. If you look around, I believe the Australians are one of those peoples, and the Americans are another."

Lin Powell noted that, "It is in education that our culture is reflected and through which it is transmitted." Throughout the conference, Americans and Australians agreed that each country must find its own ways and means of addressing three broad agenda items for education.

- **Technology.** Each country recognizes the need not only to employ new technologies in the delivery of education but also to enable its people to use and understand technologies, analyze their potentials and make wise decisions about the future.

  "Technological change is confronting education with serious but exciting challenges," observed Lynn Arnold, minister of state development and technology as well as minister of employment and further education for the state of South Australia. In a paper prepared for AEC, Arnold notes: "The education system must adapt to new demands and possibilities in such a way as to enable Australians to exploit the benefits and opportunities offered by new technologies, while ensuring that social

needs are met and the potential of individuals is maximized in a time of rapid change, uncertainty and limited resources."

In short, technology can make life more exciting or less exciting. Technology can give rise to a generation of over-specialization, fragmentation and a dependence on experts unable to relate their segmented expertise to larger community needs. Technology can also empower individuals and communities, enhancing democratic and participatory policy analysis, decision making and governance. All our conversations ended with the realization that our prospects will result from the choices we make, that matters really are under our control.

- **Change.** In both nations, subsequently, new technologies, and the changes they yield, have already bypassed the assumptions upon which schools were founded and the delivery of education organized.

  "We have inherited structures that worked quite well for ages gone by," said Cathie. "Our education systems reflect the past, not the future. Restructuring is a matter of survival."

  If we want, as the commonwealth's Garth Boomer suggests, students who are able to independently tackle new complexities, we are discussing a new approach to education, an approach enabling youngsters — as Texas Representative Wilhelmina Delco told participants — "to learn how to learn." So much has been written and said about change, about restructuring, about a transformation of our schools in the United States, it was refreshing to hear new phrases — and what they mean — from Australian colleagues. These include "inclusive and negotiated learning" and "inviting students into the curriculum."

  What they portend goes far beyond the kind of tinkering that has dominated so much of recent debate over education, at least in the United States. Students need to become active learners, and that is going to require radical, not incremental change in the way we deliver knowledge. This means new kinds of teaching, new curricula, new school structures, new relationships among schools, students, parents and communities at large — all calling for new imagination, new policy tools and often, if not more money, money more wisely spent.

- **The management of change.** Policies that guide the administration of schools and classrooms, that define the features of delivery systems and affect the behavior of education's trustees and beneficiaries can either promote or constrain practices that transform our schools.

  "The fact is, we have been bad. The fact is, we have admitted it. And, the fact is, we are doing something about it," said Bob Pearce, minister of education for the state of Western Australia.

  The point is not whether we have been bad or good. The point is that regardless of past performance, we are not being good enough for the future. Change is presently a painful enterprise, and to be good enough for the future, we've got to become more proficient at managing change and learn how to enjoy the process as well.

The commonwealth has targeted eight areas for reform concentration, each of which requires policies that enhance collaborative decision making among federal and state authorities, local administrators, teachers, students and parents. In brief, they are:

- Curriculum reform — collaborative planning to improve content and method, making the curriculum more suited to a wider range of students
- Assessment, accreditation and credentialing
- Teacher, student, parent interaction
- Teacher support and renewal
- Reform in school structure and organization
- Postsecondary school links to improve access to further and higher education
- Improvements in the provisions for groups with specific needs
- Improving public awareness and support for the value and purposes of secondary education

As a generic list, these parallel concerns in the United States. In each country, policy makers need to negotiate appropriate, complementary roles for federal and state interests. Neither country would consider that federal responsibilities are the sum of state priorities.

Should the federal/commonwealth role be limited to developing national perspectives on technology, social policy and educational research? Should the federal government intervene to ensure equitable funding distribution? The Australian Science and Technology Council, an advisory body similar to the AEC, has suggested that the Commonwealth establish a new agency, ostensibly the Australian Research Council, to oversee research funding and administration in higher education.

Until December 1966, there was no commonwealth minister of education. The federal responsibility rested entirely with the prime minister. There is some diversity between the states. One central education ministry is responsible for all education matters in all but one state, while tertiary education is under a separate ministry from primary and secondary education in South Australia.

"None of the eight education systems in Australia (six states, two territories) accepts that the federal government has a leadership role to play in our schools," said New South Wales Education Minister Rodney Cavalier.

That observation touched off a lively and informative debate on federal-state relations and the future of higher education.

Commonwealth Education Minister Susan Ryan: "I think we should look to the kind of long-standing involvement that the commonwealth has had, through the Schools Commission, with, for example, disadvantaged schools.

"The Disadvantaged Schools Program was one of the first programs that the Commonwealth Schools Commission established early in the 1970s. It is still running, and I think everyone would agree that it has been a source of additional resources and other support for the more disadvantaged schools throughout Australia which have been extremely important and have achieved a degree of equity for the children attending those schools. It has been a stable program. I do not think it has been disrupting to the states in any way. It has been a highly appropriate type of involvement for the

commonwealth, based on the view that one of the commonwealth's roles was to smooth out some of the unevenness in resource allocation by giving special attention to disadvantaged schools.

"I would also like to point to the cooperative nature of much of the commonwealth's activities. For example, the commonwealth is involved in curriculum through the national Curriculum Development Council. The body has state directors-general and people from the larger nongovernment systems on it. Its work is not simply based on Canberra. It is not a question of developing some Canberra-oriented concept of curriculum and then asking the states and nongovernment schools to adopt it. It works by developing a project collaboratively with the states and the major systems and then, perhaps, having part of the project developed in New South Wales, part in Victoria.

"One example that comes to mind is the commonwealth's initiative in peace studies for the International Year of Peace, where the New South Wales government school system and the Victorian Catholic school system each went off and developed a way in which peace concepts could be incorporated into the curriculum. There are many examples of collaborative behavior of that type. I would say that collaboration with the states and the major systems and long-term commitments are more characteristic of the way in which the commonwealth involves itself in education.

"Although there will be at least eight and probably nine views in this room about commonwealth-state relations, the Australian electorate expects the commonwealth to be involved in education. It is an expectation I think no commonwealth government could afford to ignore. There is a sense in which Australians see themselves as Australians, rather than Queenslanders or Victorians or South Australians.

"Australians do consider that there are issues of concern to Australian education which the federal government should take up and pursue. Even in times of financial difficulty, as at present, I think that we cannot ignore the fact that Australians want a perspective in education that goes beyond state or territory boundaries and see the commonwealth as the appropriate source of that."

Former Tennessee Governor Lamar Alexander: "There are significant differences in the federal-state attitude to higher education in Australia from that of the United States. In the United States there are plenty of private universities. Indeed, there are many more private universities than state. State universities are almost entirely paid for by their state government, rather than by local government, usually with some federal research money. In Australia, by contrast, there is no private university, although one is now in the planning stage, the Bond University in Queensland."

Queensland Education Minister Lin Powell: "Higher education in Australia is divided into two sectors: universities and colleges of advanced education. The universities are involved in both teaching and research. The colleges of advanced education generally focus more on teaching and less on research. Since 1973, the budget for those institutions has been a commonwealth government responsibility. Until 1973, it had been a state responsibility, in addition to federal grants, particularly capital grants.

"As a result of the 1973 agreement, the states receive less money back from the commonwealth, from income tax collection. The amount less that they receive was to be used by the commonwealth in higher education. The commonwealth then distributed to the states an amount of money for higher education, according to the populations of the state and the demand for places. So the financial arrangements for assisting higher education institutions has come from the federal government.

"A third tier of tertiary education in Australia is Technical and Further Education (TAFE). In some states TAFE is separated entirely from the Department of Education. TAFE, the colleges of advanced education and the universities together comprise tertiary education. The only area of tertiary education that is jointly funded by state and commonwealth is TAFE.

"The commonwealth government is responsible only for higher education: colleges of advanced education and universities. The states generally accept the total funding responsibility of preschools. Our years 1 to 12 are funded by states, apart from some specific programs funded by the commonwealth government. The local government level does not contribute to education at all in this country.

"Taxing arrangements differ in the United States and Australia. In Australia, the commonwealth collects income tax and company taxes. The states collect land tax and stamp duties, which are generally the income earners for the states from which they derive their revenue to run individual departments. It is important to understand the differences between tax raising in Australia and the United States."

Western Australia Education Minister Bob Pearce: "There is nothing like consensus in this country for the view that the commonwealth ought to withdraw from education. The only reason the commonwealth started providing significant funding for education in the late 1960s and early 1970s was because there was a massive campaign, run by both parents' and teachers' groups, with the slogan 'Federal Funds for State Schools.' This was based on the argument that the states did not have the financial capacity to build up the education system in the way that they would want.

"There is no doubt at all in my mind, and I think in the minds of the vast majority of teachers and parents in this country, that the impact of the commonwealth over governments of both persuasions has been dramatically to increase the amount of funds available to education, which would not have been the case if it had been left to the states alone."

WHAT DID WE LEARN ABOUT OURSELVES?

"Australia — it may be the best place in the world for Americans to look at America."

- Former Tennessee Governor Lamar Alexander

Australians freely admit that they look upon America as their laboratory for the testing of new ideas in education. They quite explicitly asked American delegates for advice — "How did you do it? . . . What should we do?" Americans quite naturally resisted this direction and confined themselves to providing illustrations of American experience, which Australians found useful.

Bill Kolberg, president, National Alliance of Business, for example, discussed business-school partnerships, the Boston Compact and the "adopt a school" scheme. When Allan Ostar, president of the American Association of State Colleges and Universities, responded to Ryan's assessment of higher education finance in the U.S., he became what Australian journalists considered "hot property," discussing, for example, fund-raising efforts at both private and public institutions.

"I think we are agreed that what our economy needs is more people in education at a higher level, and a higher quality of education," said Ryan, touching off the exchange.

"The commonwealth's problem is how to achieve that at a time when the business community is saying, on the one hand, we need a better-educated work force and, on the other are telling us that the state of our international debt suggests that we should be actually reducing public expenditure. We have to juggle those two requirements, for improving public services in areas like education at the same time as reducing our national and international debt.

"There is nowhere where that dilemma is more difficult to resolve than in the question of funding for higher education.

"I have many reservations about moving away from the publicly funded system we have at the moment. A recent visit to the United States did not help me to overcome those reservations. Despite the long tradition of private investment in public education and education generally in the United States, the current economic difficulties in the United States threw up the following picture:

- "Increasing individual indebtedness by students who have to take loans and find that the repayments are crippling to them.
- "Increasing dropouts caused by people failing to cope with the difficult financial situation.
- "Increasing diversion of federal funds to cover loan defaults — I am told that it is in the vicinity of $1 billion a year currently.
- "Increasing family or parental indebtedness — this would be something new and fairly radical to introduce into Australia. We noticed in the United States that currently families are being invited to remortgage their homes to provide for

prepayment of college fees for their students. Given the housing interest rates in Australia, the idea of introducing that as a government solution to the problem is not something I would approach with any confidence.

- "Decreasing equity and participation — I note, for example, that the participation of Black students in higher education in the United States is actually decreasing. Similarly with other students from poorer backgrounds.

- "Increasing differentials between those universities and colleges, public or private, that are very well-established financially and those that are of lesser significance in the higher education sphere — a number of the latter are very expensive for the students who attend them, so that the value of the education they receive is perhaps declining.

- "An almost total absence of that sector of education which we called TAFE, which is publicly accessible and available.

"In the light of that less-than-encouraging future, I am not inclined to think that we should immediately try to solve our problems in funding higher education by trying to move the cost of it back to the student. Having said that, I cannot easily see any short-term solution for us.

"I would be interested to hear, especially from the United States' delegates, what sorts of approaches they believe a government in our circumstances can take. We do need more and better education, and at the same time, we do need to contain our public debt."

"I would like to commend Senator Ryan for her perceptive analysis of the difficulties that we are now facing in the United States," replied Ostar. "The trend in recent years, to shift more and more of the cost of education to the student, has resulted in the very situation described. We increasingly have students graduating from college with heavy debts. This is distorting the educational process, we believe, by substantially increasing enrollments in our business and engineering schools, not only because it results in greater income, but because students with those heavy debts then are required to go into fields that will have much greater economic returns.

"There is the added difficulty of a married couple, both of whom are graduating from college, with a combined debt of perhaps $20,000.

"The effect of this on our economy has not been fully appreciated. It is almost impossible to qualify for a mortgage when you already have a debt, perhaps of as much as $20,000 and growing. It is almost impossible to purchase life insurance. It delays family formation.

"Because of this shift from the cost to the general society to the student, and the move to more debt, we have seen a fundamental philosophical shift which I find most damaging. What we are saying, in effect, is that the individual is the beneficiary of higher education. The individual must pay for it. It ought to be a consumer product, like purchasing a home. We tend to ignore or neglect the benefits to society of having educated citizens.

"So as we have talked about economic development, at the same time we are reversing the process by ignoring the social and economic benefits of providing education as an investment rather than considering it as an expenditure.

"This is a debate that is going on in Congress. It is a debate that is going on in our various legislatures. Our colleges and universities have tried in a number of ways to respond. Years ago, voluntary support was limited primarily to the private universities, but in more recent years has become an important part of our public universities.

"Pennsylvania State University, for example, is proceeding in a capital campaign to attract $200 million in private funds from alumnae, business and industry because of the recognition that the quality of education depends on what we call the 'margin of excellence.' That is, the government can provide the basic cost of providing an education, but if we are to have a truly excellent education, if we are to find the equipment that we need to furbish our laboratories, then this will have to come from private sources. Indeed, there are tax incentives that encourage the voluntary support.

"The commonwealth minister for education is now faced with pressure for increasing tuition fees and corresponding reaction from the students. Our own secretary of education has stated on a number of occasions that a college graduate in the United States can expect to earn well over $600,000 or more in the course of a lifetime, therefore that individual ought to pay for it. Our response is that even at 30% marginal [tax] rate, that student in fact pays back, many times over, the cost of that education.

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A later conversation between Cathie and Pearce also proved instructive for American participants.

"Australian education systems are few, large, but traditionally highly centralized," Cathie said. "That can assist in bringing about significant change in a short period of time or it can contribute to the fact that many proposed changes have been either ephemeral or totally unsuccessful in changing educational practice at the classroom level in the absence of changes in attitudes and in commitment."

"The discussion this afternoon has been interesting for the different views held by our American colleagues and most of the Australian delegates," Pearce said. "The reason for this difference may be that we stand at a different point in history with regard to standardized examinations. In Australia, over the last decade or so, we have been moving away from standardized public examinations, even at a state level, because of the perception that they have led to great constriction on the curriculum.

"We felt the Australian community was slipping behind the world because our curriculum was not broad enough to cope with the increasing demands of a complex society. We have tried to develop more complex systems for assessing student performance and so to enable a more diverse curriculum.

"Perhaps Tennessee is more concerned with the taxpayers' input because, although you have the same problem, you see it from the other end. The desire for these simple public accountability mechanisms is driven by politics and not by education. People may feel that if you can get some simple system that explains who is better and who is worse, that everyone can understand, everyone is happy. Unfortunately, those simplistic measures might be simple and easy to understand, but fundamentally they are not true because the education system, any education system, is much more complicated than that.

"Perhaps the United States has had so decentralized a system that the whole issue of quality control has not existed. In the highly centralized systems that we have, the quality control has been quite precisely there. As we move to a greater degree of

flexibility and autonomy, and particularly to wider areas of student choice and student curriculum, we are not anxious for the growing freedom in our system to be constricted."

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Having participated in this exchange, what can we more clearly say about the nature of American education as compared to Australian?

- The United States is large and diverse. Policy and policy making is diffused. There are more levels of education and administration in the U.S. than in Australia, but are we using this diversity as a strength? Our sense is that we have an important attribute but we haven't used it properly, at least as completely as we might. Is our system too complex?

  We are impressed that Powell plans to abolish several policy bodies, which is not the American way of doing business. We tend to push them off to the side and hope that they will wither. Actually abolishing something every now and then might be a refreshing thing to do.

- There is more diversity among the colleges and universities in the United States, a spectrum rather than a set of sectors. But again, are we using this diversity as a great resource that we might bring it to bear on our problems?

- Australians seem to have more flexibility in their Technical and Further Education section, which seems more effectively involved with the community. We could learn a lot from how Australians do that.

- Despite centralized school systems, Australians seem to be more involved in reducing bureaucracy than we are. New South Wales is cutting back on middle-level bureaucracy — moving that group back into the schools for more productive employment — a growing situation in the United States that has not been adequately addressed.

- In neither country does the federal and state relationship work as smoothly as it might. A change is coming in the United States during these final years of the Reagan administration. This presents an opportunity if we were to devote ourselves to redefining the relationship between the federal government and the rest of the education community. It is certainly time to rethink roles and ask how can each find complementary roles that are appropriate.

- Elementary and secondary education in the United States is a combination of state, local and federal monies — and occasionally private funding. In higher education there is a good deal of private funding and a good deal of family funding, along with state and federal subsidies. Our impression is that we have undervalued the usefulness of joint funding Discussion throughout the conference focused on getting rid of the messiness that joint funding brings about. But the more we listen to Australians argue about their system - and realize that we have been making the same arguments about our own — the more we are convinced that we would be very wise to recognize that that jumble serves a purpose and that joint-funded endeavors seem to do a lot better than single-funded endeavors.

  The United States is blessed with diversity, and we ought to be careful not to push for uniform answers to the point that we lose the value that we get from that diversity.

- There is a common tendency in our systems for education, when it is at its best, to involve students deeply. On the other hand, at its most ordinary, there's a tendency for education to teach in a passive mode. When we talk about flexibility on the part of the student, risk taking, creativity, learning habits that last a lifetime, we are talking about moving toward the involvement of the student in the learning process in a very different way.

- Finally, we observed that when Americans explain matters we first suggest that we know a great deal about the subject and then proceed to prove that we don't. The Australians follow the opposite pattern. They'll say that they don't know much about it at all and then proceed to show that they do. This could be an effective mode for education advocates in the United States if for no other reason that it would have great surprise factor.

AFTERTHOUGHTS FROM AN AMERICAN DELEGATE

Calvin Frazier, Colorado commissioner of education, remained after the conference and visited public schools and the University of Queensland. He was struck by two factors: huge private school enrollments at primary and secondary levels and low overall retention rates.

We spoke with him upon his return to Colorado, where he shared some of his notes and personal observations.

About 25% of Australian students are enrolled in private, "nongovernment" schools. Most of them are church affiliated with 80% of these maintained by the Roman Catholic Church. Government funding for private schools remains a contentious issue in Australia. Private schools receive between 20% and 40% of the average per-pupil costs of public schools, depending on need. Given this situation, though, Frazier found it odd that there is no private higher education, though a resort developer is exploring the possibility of opening up a private university near the Great Barrier Reef.

Frazier met public school principals in Cairns, located in northeast Queensland, who send their own children to private schools. One wants his son to be a lawyer and is sending the boy to a school where the children of prominent attorneys are enrolled so that he can make early social contacts.

Only 47% of Australians finish secondary school. Students are required to attend school through age 15, generally their 10th year of formal schooling and Australians are seeking to increase postcompulsory rates to more than 60% by 1990. Many youngsters enter TAFE or apprenticeship programs after age 15, so in many respects they are continuing with their education, even though they are not finishing high school.

"Retention rates will increase because the economy is so tight and kids have no place to go. That is more a comment on the economy than on the schools," said Frazier. "Australians have to make that figure higher because of what they are doing in the schools, because they are doing something different, not because of the economy."

Frazier was surprised by the strong role of organized labor, which, he observed, has a solid grasp on the schools. "You either have to have labor support or there will be no change," he said. "A career ladder, for example, would never survive in most parts of Australia."

Frazier returned from Australia encouraged by our approach to involving lay people in the schools, but noted that Australians are leaning in this direction and experimenting with local school councils.

He also found it encouraging that Australian educators often can quote the latest reports of the National Association of Secondary School Principals or the Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy, for example. "Australians are very up on American research and literature."

NATURE OF MEETINGS

A number of considerations come to mind as we evaluate our performance as a delegation. What would we do differently? How could we have better prepared? What do our questions reveal about ourselves? What kind of questions did the Australians have and how appropriately did we answer?

- **Delegations.** We think that it is important to put together a team that will speak out, listen, and not be dogmatic or defensive. A team of varied background, interest and expertise is more reflective of American diversity than a group representing a single party line.

  Were we putting together a new delegation, we would include experts who can respond with facts and data, not just policy makers. The best delegation is composed of outgoing individuals who are both knowledgeable and articulate. We also found that delegates have to be comfortable "being Americans" in a foreign environment.

- **Clear objectives and expectations for outcomes.** The meetings might run well, participants get on task quickly, there is advance organization, discussion is encouraged, there is review at the end — in short, every reason to say the participants did well, that the performance was "good." But unless we determine what was to have been accomplished and whether it was actually accomplished, there is no way to determine if the session was effective. At the same time, this kind of meeting is of an exploratory nature and discussion often turns in surprising directions.

- **Social activities.** We found that quite often important discussions took place during social activities, such as tea or lunch. The structure of the formal meetings was such that by the time speeches had been presented and official reaction made, dialogue was at the fermentation point — and delegates broke for tea. Everyone, especially Americans, felt compelled to give a short speech, perhaps by way of introduction, instead of launching straight into their presentation. That behavior should be avoided.

- **Press interaction.** Education reporters for the Australian newspapers and broadcast media were interested in hearing about particular facets of American education from individual delegates. Again, this highlights the importance of a delegation representing diverse backgrounds. Press interaction was also a way for each participant to stay involved, feel "wanted" and make significant contributions to our overall presence.

  There was some discussion over relations with the press during the actual conference. Powell said education coverage in Australia is inadequate. "The newspaper sends an inexperienced young person who can't spell 'education.' I don't want to have to spend three or four hours explaining what a school is." "The frightening thing," added Cavalier, "is that every journalist at some point went to school."

  One Australian reporter who attended most of the conference reported that "the U.S. has virtually no nongovernment schools and we have a lot." Were we to blame for that misconception? Perhaps because we spoke primarily about public schooling

and public policy matters, this element of American education was lost in translation.

- **Prior meetings.** Should we have had an American delegates' meeting ahead of time in Australia? Our delegation came from every compass point, many arriving and meeting each other for the first time in Australia during the conference. In hindsight, we should have had some meeting among American delegates before we met as a delegation with the Australians — at the same time, we would not want our presentations to appear in any way as rehearsed.

SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIALS OF INTEREST

1. Three press releases from the office of Lin Powell, chairman, Australian Education Commission, regarding joint AEC-ECS conference

2. "AEC Seeks Relevance in Curriculums," press coverage of the AEC-ECS conference, The Australian

3. Report on follow-up activities between AEC-ECS; minutes from the AEC Executive Committee

4. "How the Japanese Beat Us in School," The Australian, reprint from World Press Review

5. "Higher Education in Many Countries: U.S. Has Greatest Access," The Boston Globe

6. "Education Abroad: Pacific Overtures," commentary by Nicholas Paleologos, chair, Committee on Education, Massachusetts House of Representatives, Phi Delta Kappan

7. "Australia New Favorite of Foreign Investors," Reuters News Service, The Denver Post

8. "The World of Work: Education Must Be Useful — as Well as Satisfying and Enlightening," commentary by Garth Boomer, chair, Commonwealth Schools Commission, Curriculum Development in Australian Schools

9. "July Elections Pose Uncertainties for Australian Colleges and Universities," The Chronicle of Higher Education

10. "Tough Economic Forecast for Australian Graduates," The Chronicle of Higher Education

media release
Lin Powell m.l.a.
minister for education
press secretary 224 7880

CONFERENCE DISCUSSING FEDERAL/STATE RELATIONSHIPS

DEVELOPMENTS in Federal and State relationships in education will be the subject of the first session tomorrow of a three-day international conference in Brisbane.

The inaugural joint conference of the Australian Education Council (AEC) and the Education Commission of the States (ECS), United States, is being held at the Parliamentary Annexe.

Delegates for the AEC are the Federal, State and Territory Ministers of Education, with their New Zealand and Papua New Guinea counterparts as associate members.

The ECS membership includes State Governors, legislators and educators.

Queensland Education Minister Mr Lin Powell, who is current chairman of the AEC, will officially welcome about 100 delegates before the start of the first session at 9 a.m. tomorrow (Friday).

He and ECS chairman Dr Frank Newman will give a joint media conference at the Parliamentary Annexe starting at 8.15 a.m.tomorrow (Friday).

Tomorrow's session will be followed by a seminar involving business and industry leaders on Saturday and Sunday on the theme, "The Interface of Education with Industry, Business and Commerce".

The Governor-General, Sir Ninian Stephen, will officially open the seminar at 10 a.m. on Saturday.

Chairman for the Friday session is a former Governor of Tennessee, Hon. Lamar Alexander.

Other U.S. delegates include Hon. Wilhelmina Delco, a member of the Texas House of Representatives; Dr Calvin Frazier, Commissioner of Education in Colorado and ECS Treasurer; Dr E.K. Fretwell, Chancellor of the University of North Carolina; Mr Bill Kolberg, President of the National Alliance of Business in Washington; and Mr Earl Mackay, Executive Director of the National Conference of State Legislatures.

A welcome dinner will be held at the College of Tourism and Hospitality, South Brisbane, tonight (Thursday), the official conference dinner will be at Parliament House tomorrow night (Friday) and the State Government will host a dinner on the Kookaburra Queen on Saturday night.

26 March 1987

media release
Lin Powell m.l.a.
minister for education
press secretary 224 7880

INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION CONFERENCE BEGINS

TOURISM is an area where education has acted to meet the needs of industry in Queensland, State Education Minister Mr Lin Powell told an international conference in Brisbane this morning.

He was welcoming more than 100 delegates from the United States and around Australia to the inaugural joint conference of the Education Commission of the States (United States) and the Australian Education Council, of which he is current chairman.

"To visitors from the United States, though you are here on business you are part of a boom in Queensland -- that is, the boom in tourism," he said.

"Tourism has become the State's growth industry, as figures show.

"It is now worth $9 billion a year to the Queensland economy and that is constantly increasing.

"Official estimates are that 100,000 additional Americans will visit Queensland by the beginning of the next decade, about half of the total for the six States and Territories combined.

"We estimate that 425,000 international visitors spent time in Queensland last year, representing 37 percent of the Australian total and a 10 percent growth since 1979."

Mr Powell said about 8000 students a year in colleges of Technical and Further Education were now engaged in some form of training for the industry and courses were being developed for secondary students.

"It is another area where we are meeting the needs of industry in consultation with industry," Mr Powell said in reference to the theme of a seminar to follow today's session -- "The Interface of Education with Industry, Business and Commerce".

He said community leaders, industrialists and a trade union official would be attending the seminar.

Delegates, including Ministers of Education, attending the conference are from all States and Territories, New Zealand and Papua New Guinea, as well as from the U.S.

The conference will be officially opened by the Governor-General, Sir Ninian Stephen, tomorrow (Saturday) at 10 a.m.

27 March 1987

media release
Lin Powell m.l.a.
minister for education
press secretary 224 7880

STRONGER EDUCATIONAL TIES WITH U.S.

EDUCATIONAL ties between the United States and Australia will be strengthened as a result of a three-day conference which ended in Brisbane this afternoon.

The conference was the first involving the Australian Education Council (AEC) and the Education Commission of the States (ECS), United States.

AEC chairman, Queensland Education Minister Mr Lin Powell, and ECS chairman Dr Frank Newman, announced moves to strengthen ties between the countries at the conclusion of the conference, which was held at the Parliamentary Annexe.

"These moves include encouragement of more exchanges and/or visits of senior education administrators along the lines of the Fulbright scheme," they said in a joint statement.

"This would be linked with a program for policy information exchange on educational developments and issues.

"Further joint meetings between the two countries, probably involving other nations, will be held.

"Representatives of the ECS and the AEC will attend the other's annual meetings."

The Brisbane conference was attended by more than 100 delegates and observers including Education Ministers from the Commonwealth, all States, the Northern Territory, New Zealand and Papua New Guinea.

Theme of the seminar was "the Interface of Education with Industry, Business and Commerce".

Dr Newman said education should learn to enjoy the process of change, instead of allowing it to be painful.

"No matter how good our education system is now, it will be totally inadequate for the future," he said.

"The issue is that we should not berate ourselves for perceived past failures -- rather we must energise ourselves to take on the extraordinary task of being good enough for the future.

"The issue is not whether we have failed in education, but that change is outpacing our capacity to adapt.

"The challenge is not what we should do, but whether we choose to do it."

Mr Powell said the conference would prove to be of considerable benefit to the children of both nations.

"The United States, as a complex, developed industrial society has similar problems to ours with regard to education's response to the requirements of industry," he said.

"The ECS of course represents 48 individual States so there is an ever greater diversity of opinion than in Australia.

"It has been extremely useful for us to listen to the opinions that make up that diversity and we can go away and decide where solutions they have found may fit into our context."

29 March 1987

AEC seeks relevance in curriculums

By HEATHER McKENZIE

THE inaugural joint conference of the Australian Education Council (AEC) and the US Education Commission of the States was held in Brisbane at the weekend.

The theme of the conference was the Interface of Education with Business, Industry and Commerce.

Eighty people were invited to attend, including senior politicians, educationalists and industry leaders.

The AEC is made up of the Federal Minister for Education and the ministers of education in each Australian State. Associate members include representatives from Papua New Guinea and New Zealand.

The US commission is a senior policy making body consisting of the governors of all US States and a number of legislators and senior education officials.

The conference was divided into four half-day sessions with themes ranging from the educational expectations of industry and government to technological development and changes in the workplace and their relevance for education and curriculum development.

Obsolete

The head of the Department of Technical and Further Education (TAFE) in South Australia, Mr Lyall Fricker, spoke on behalf of the South Australian Minister for Technology and Further Education, Mr Lynn Arnold.

He delivered the keynote address at the session on technological development, on the second day of the conference.

Mr Fricker said information technology had the capacity to bring about radical changes in society and was the greatest challenge facing educators today.

"The 1985 OECD report on our youth policies said our educational system was founded on the dangerously obsolete notion of an economy requiring a small minority of professional and skilled trade workers and a large majority of semi-skilled and unskilled workers," he said.

"That does not fit in well with our aim of promoting the use of technology and promoting its introduction in a socially responsible way."

Mr Fricker said the education system had to introduce curriculums which avoided over-specification.

Instead, he said, there was a demand for sound and general education.

"People will have to be given the life skills necessary to handle the increasingly rapid change in technology and in the society in which we live," he said.

"This would meet that fundamental requirement of education that it help each person to lead a full and responsible life in the community."

The curriculums would need to promote a number of concepts, he said, including a constructive yet questioning attitude towards technology and its introduction: recognition of the relationship between technology and science on the one hand and and its social, economic and ecological effects, on the other.

Education would also have to promote creativity and encourage a higher level of self-starting and entrepeneurial skills which had too often been lacking in our education systems.

Mr Fricker said South Australia was headed towards a breaking down of traditional education and its secondary school curriculums included subjects such as small business, computing and technology studies.

"We have also implemented a secondary schools technology program which funds innovative technology-related programs in our high schools," he said.

"The program is aimed specifically at supporting technology education outside the field of information technology, which has tended to attract the most financial support."

In closing, he asked the conference delegates to consider whether the present education structure was capable of changing sufficiently to meet the demands of technology or whether radical changes would be necessary to make possible an appropriate response to the technological revolution.

Other speakers on the same subject included the managing director of IBM Australia, Mr Brian Finn.

He told the conference that school students had to understand why work was important and to develop a positive attitude towards it.

Australian, Mar. 31, 1987, p, 29

FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS FROM THE JOINT CONFERENCE OF THE AEC-ECS

(From the Minutes of the 34th Meeting of the AEC Executive Committee)

Policy Information Exchange

It is suggested that there be an exchange of available papers on developments and issues of current interest, eg, TAFE, change processes in education, school reforms.

The AEC and ECS offices would be the link organisations with material being obtained from member systems at both the Australian and United States ends, as well as from New Zealand and Papua New Guinea.

Subsequent Conference

A further recommendation is to hold another conference at a US venue. Suggestions for the topic will need to be considered and it is seen as important that elected representatives as well as officials and other community leaders be invited to participate.

Perhaps the conference could be held before (or after) another conference which may be of interest to visitors from other countries. The conference could include Canadians as well as AEC members.

Attendance at AEC and ECS Annual Meetings

Both the AEC and ECS are to invite a representative of the 'other' organisation to attend their annual meetings as an observer.

Fostering of Exchanges by Senior Educational Administrators

A final proposal is to encourage more exchanges by senior education. administrators along the lines of the Fulbright scheme. The period of these

exchanges could vary from a few weeks to several months and the recipient could liaise with the Executive Committee of their Council/Commission in respect to the objectives of their visit - these could include assisting with aspects of the POLICY INFORMATION EXCHANGE - and their itinerary. A key requirement of these visits would be for recipients to submit a major report on the completion of the visit.

Following discussion of the proposed publication of edited material from the major papers, reactions, summaries and group discussion, it was agreed that these matters would be left with the Secretary and Mr Murray Bladwell and that:

a material from the Friday sessions could also be included, after consultation with the AEC Chairman and Mr R Winder on any issues considered to be sensitive;

b a deadline of 31 May 1987 should be set for completion of the draft publication to be brought to the 54th (June 1987) AEC meeting;

c the publication should be distributed to all participants as well as other members of the AEC and its Standing Committee;

d a brief summary could be drafted and made available to a wider audience;

e consideration could be given to making the publication itself more widely available on a cost basis; and

f final decisions on these matters would be made at the 54th (June 1987) AEC meeting.

Tokyo schoolchildren — "The Japanese system, partly because of its rigidity, does much better in providing high-quality education to everybody." Laffont/Sygma

How the Japanese Beat Us in School

Fiercely competitive academics come first

By GREG SHERIDAN

THE AUSTRALIAN

The U.S. and Australia, dissimiliar in so many ways, are similar in two deceptively linked spheres. Both are facing an economic crisis that grows out of international competitiveness, and both have remarkably similar school systems.

Both countries are experiencing enormous trade deficits, especially with Japan, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and South Korea. And both the U.S. and Australia have experienced similar education reforms in the past 10 to 15 years, reforms that make their education systems almost the opposite of the Japanese system. The question is: Do education and economic performance interact?

Excerpted from the conservative "Australian" of Sydney.

Increasingly, cultural explanations are being advanced for the economic miracle of Japan and the other east Asian societies, as indeed they must be for the success of the West Germans. It is not just the effective use of governmental macroeconomic tools that produces economic and social success, but also the ability of the people to respond to opportunities.

More and more U.S. business leaders believe their education system is contributing directly to their economic woes and that it is threatening to bury the U.S. in a trough of intellectual and cultural mediocrity from which it may never emerge. In 1983, a special presidential commission produced a bombshell report entitled, "A Nation at Risk," which sparked a move for education reforms. Its broad conclusions were endorsed by similar studies conducted by the Association of American Principals and, most recently, in a comparative study of the U.S. and Japanese education systems.

The reports have all found the same things: U.S. education has abandoned academic excellence as its primary goal. It has substituted therapeutic and social goals for intellectual ones; it tries to make children feel good about themselves, effectively encouraging them to take courses that are not too demanding and, therefore, do not carry the threat of failure, thus blurring the distinction between success and failure.

The irony is that the U.S. system is not working as a tool of therapy either. Japan's fiercely competitive and rigorously academic school system is often blamed for putting so much pressure on

students to succeed that many teenagers commit suicide. In fact, Japan's rate of teenage suicide is lower than America's. While strong discipline and pressure to succeed may cause anxiety and stress, so can a lack of discipline and the associated problems of playground violence and drug abuse.

One stark fact is that Japan's schoolchildren and teachers work much, much harder than those in the U.S. or Australia. While Japan's school year is about 240 days long, in the U.S. it is about 180 days long. In their short summer break, Japanese schoolchildren must complete many homework assignments; U.S. and Australian schoolchildren do no schoolwork over their long summer break.

The Japanese education system is structured around a series of competitive examinations. No matter how well or poorly a child has been doing in school, it is the child's performance in these external exams that determines his or her future. If a child does well in the exam at the end of primary school, he or she will go to an academic high school or a prestigious private school. If the student does poorly, he or she might go to a vocational or technical school.

This system is anathema to modern U.S. and Australian educators. They believe that a child's options should not be limited when the child is young. Therefore, in the U.S. and Australian systems, the student gets chance after chance to re-enter the academic stream and to achieve high results. Virtually anyone who matriculates in Australia or the U.S. can go to college; this is not the case in Japan.

Yet the paradox is that the Japanese system, partly because of its rigidity, does much better in providing high-quality education to everybody. The exams, which have their down side in shunting off students to non-academic schools for doing poorly on one exam, nonetheless provide the incentive for sustained effort that is utterly lacking in the Australian and U.S. systems. In trying to craft a painless school system, American and Australian educators have come up with a vacuous system.

Japanese students study demanding subjects such as languages, mathematics, and physics in proportionately much greater numbers than do U.S. students. Only 6 percent of U.S. high school students study calculus.

"A Nation at Risk" concluded that the radical decline in the numbers of U.S. students studying intellectually demanding subjects was caused by the proliferation of choices in U.S. high schools. Students, being subject to the normal human impulse of laziness, tend to take soft subjects such as environmentalism or lifestyle courses or even, at the ridiculous extreme, disco dance appreciation, which was once an approved course in an Australian high school. For Japanese students these options do not exist.

Both U.S. and Australian pedagogical fashions dictate that subjects be immediately relevant to the students' environments so that students will find them interesting. This has been a catastrophic reform. It not only fails to broaden students' cultural horizons, but it clearly tends to favor the trivial over the substantial, the academically anemic over the key intellectual disciplines.

Similarly, the quality and training of Japanese teachers is better than that of U.S. or Australian teachers. In Confucian-influenced societies, education is valued very highly, and teachers and academics are greatly esteemed. High school teachers tend to have degrees in the subjects they teach, rather than in teaching methods. In the U.S. and Australia, the trend has been for more and more high school teachers to do their entire training in institutions dedicated to teaching teachers how to teach.

In Japanese society, the family — especially the mother — is intensely involved in the child's education. Married women with children participate much less in the Japanese work force than they do in the Australian or U.S. work forces. They are free to fulfill their traditional roles of educators and nurturers. Parents supervise homework and frequently forbid students much social life, for academic success is seen as the only road to financial and personal security. Even the best teachers in the U.S. and Australia are limited by lack of parental involvement and by homes that are not conducive to study.

In the past few years, the U.S. has seen a turning away from the education trends that have produced such disasters. There is more stress on a common curriculum. Some states have introduced longer school years, and others have introduced competence tests for teachers. Diversity is no longer the aim. A nationwide fight against slack discipline is underway.

Australian education generally apes U.S. education. We tend to do what the U.S. does, only a few years later. Whether Australia will follow the U.S. in this counter-reformation is unclear. Even in the U.S. the prospects of the new reform movement are not particularly good. It is easier to destroy a good education system than to recreate one.

In one key respect, the U.S. is much better off than Australia. U.S. students still do a series of objective tests, so that Americans at least have the data to plot their decline and on which to base a strategy to correct it.

Australia's education authorities, under the intimidation of militant teacher's unions, have refused to undertake this sort of systematic testing. It is the worst possible sort of intellectual cowardice, which prevents Australian education authorities from even determining the extent of the disaster.

As our trade problems and those of the U.S. continue to worsen, as the deficiencies of our work forces become more obvious, and as economic power flows from our societies and toward the industrious societies of Asia, we can reflect that a large part of the problem lies in the classroom. (March 7) □

Higher education in many countries: US has greatest access

By Debbie Goldberg
Special to the Globe

When Yukihazu Iwasa entered the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1967, his father paid about 12 times the average earnings of a Japanese college graduate to put him through school each year.

But his parents were willing to shell out their hard-earned yen to send Iwasa to MIT because they feared he wouldn't get the best possible education in Japan.

"The basic problem in Japan is that there are only one or two really good prestigious schools," said Iwasa, now an MIT researcher and teacher in the field of mechanical engineering. "In this country, there are many top schools."

Although certainly not without its critics, the US higher education system is unique in the world for several reasons, say supporters: its diversity, access for all ranges of student abilities and financial resources, and the sheer size of the enterprise.

"It's the best system in the world by far, and everybody knows it," said Martin Trow, director of the Center for Studies in Higher Education at the University of California at Berkeley. In France and Great Britain, Trow noted, far fewer young adults participate in higher education than do in the United States. He also said the connection between the "elite" social groups and the "elite" colleges is much stronger than in this country.

"The working class and peasantry don't assume they're going to the Grandes Ecoles," which are the most prestigious French universities, Trow said. In essence, he said, higher education is not as much of a social stepping stone in many countries as it is in the United States.

"Our system is a colossal experiment in access," said Robert Berdahl, professor of higher education at the University of Maryland. "We believe, in the long run, it is to the nation's benefit to try to throw the net out as widely as we can. No other country in the world attempts to send as many students on to some form of higher education."

The American notion of access, however, is viewed more skeptically in other countries. Iain Frater, education attache at the British Embassy in Washington, D.C., said US institutions enroll many students regardless of their academic abilities, leading to a high dropout rate and a need for remedial education.

"Higher education is not something we feel should be available to someone without academic abilities," he said. "The idea of remedial schemes for university students is incredible to us."

In addition, Frater said the British often emphasize job experience in lieu of a college education. He pointed out that his brother, now a top bank official, left school at age 16 to take a job in a bank.

Almost 75 percent of American students earn high-school diplomas, and just more than half of them enter some type of postsecondary program within a year, according to the education department's Center for Education Statistics.

In all, some 12.4 million students are enrolled in US colleges, universities, community colleges, vocational and other postsecondary schools. The department estimates that about 33 percent of 18- to-21-year-olds are enrolled in college. In France, only 30 percent of precollege students earn the "baccalaureate" degree necessary to continue their education, said Jacqueline Egan, education adviser at the French Embassy in Washington, D.C. Of those who do earn the degree, up to 85 percent enter some form of higher education, she said.

In contrast, about 95 percent of Japanese students graduate from high school, and some 35 percent of college-age students go on to postsecondary studies, said William Cummings, a professor at the Harvard Graduate School of Education who contributed to a recent education department report on Japanese education.

Some 14 percent of Canada's 18-to-24-year-olds are enrolled full time in the country's 82 four-year universities, said Christine Tausig, spokeswoman for the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada. The universities are supported largely by the provinces, although the federal government funds much research on campus, she said.

The notion of college financing also is much different in other countries. With few exceptions, higher education in Great Britain, France and Canada is publicly supported.

Indeed, British students pay almost nothing for tuition and often are subsidized for housing, food and other expenses, regardless of family income. And British students are not expected to work their way through college or borrow money to do so, said Berdahl.

French and Canadian colleges are similarly low-cost, although students and families are expected to bear more of their education and living costs, Canadian and French officials said.

In contrast, about 80 percent of

'Our system is a colossal experiment in access.'
– Robert Berdahl, professor of higher education at the University of Maryland.

Japanese students attend private institutions, although the top tuition of about $3,000 is modest compared with many private school tuitions in the United States, Cummings said. To help pay the costs, Japanese students "work a lot, far more than in this country," he said.

In none of these countries, however, does the cost of college remotely approach the $16,000 or so it costs at many private institutions in the United States, noted D. Bruce Johnstone, author of a recent book on college financing in the United States and other countries.

Yet with the range of federal, state, institutional and private financial aid available for American students, there are far fewer socioeconomic barriers to higher education in this country, said Johnstone, who is president of the State University College at Buffalo in New York.

While the United States has its Ivy League and other prestigious institutions, the number of top institutions is much more limited in Japan, France and England. In addition, those interviewed said it is much more important in those three countries to attend the top-tier schools than it is in the United States.

"It's more important in Japan to go to the best schools," said Cummings. "It's impossible to get into some of the major corporations without going to the best."

And since getting into the most prestigious universities is of such importance, the scramble to enroll in these institutions starts early in these countries. For instance, Japanese students face stiff competition to get into the best secondary schools, Cummings said.

"You decide to go to college in junior high school, not your junior year of college," said Iwasa at MIT. "You have to study hard regularly, even in the summertime," he added.

Despite criticisms that there are more barriers for minority and lower-class students in some of these other countries, Frater claims that the British system is not much different from that of the United States, in that "children of middle- and upper-class parents tend to perform better in school."

Frater, however, did acknowledge that several more years of education and training might ease the high unemployment rate of British youth. "Our system is criticized for allowing such a large proportion of young people to come out of the educational system with no skills," he said.

And Johnstone admits that wide access to US higher education probably has devalued the college degree in this country. But, he added, "We are much less concerned about the graduate who can immediately find a job. Our view is to let people have a chance."

Pacific Overtures

Enough Japan worship already, says Mr. Paleologos. After all, even as many Americans embrace Japanese schooling, the Japanese are talking of reforming their educational system.

BY NICHOLAS PALEOLOGOS

OUR NATION is at risk. Like no other event since the launching of Sputnik I nearly 30 years ago, the publication of those words rocked the foundation of U.S. public education.

Today, however, the dominant color of the prism of paranoia through which Americans view their schools is not red but yellow. Each day brings another fatuous bit of reportage extolling the virtues of Japanese education. In the wake of such articles and spurred on by a new and insufferable breed of education reformer, legislatures in state after state are seizing control of local schools. The Japanese model of more centralization, more structure, more rigidity, and more requirements has become a blueprint for the first wave of school reform.

But if you think that students, trapped in this national orgy of self-flagellation, will end up in better schools as a result, think again. In fact, thinking again is just what the Japanese themselves are doing these days.

On 26 April 1986, in the most sweeping reexamination of their school system since the Meiji Restoration of 1868, a national council on education reform appointed by Prime Minister Nakasone issued an astonishing report card on Japanese schooling. It should be required reading for U.S. policy makers. The Japanese experts bluntly characterized their own school system as "an educational wasteland." "We must," they wrote, "face the harsh reality of the problems in our schools and the serious state of dilapidation and desolation of our educational system which they signal." They went on to complain of "increasing public criticism expressing distrust of schools, teachers, and the education sector as a whole."

Although the tone of their prose is all too familiar, their proposals are not. The most startling irony is reserved for their conclusion that "it is necessary to promote decentralization so that individual localities and schools may fully develop diverse identities and exercise independent initiative and creativity." Just when American reformers are preaching the gospel of sit down, shut up, and learn, their Japanese counterparts seem to be saying sit back, relax, and discern.

Concern over schools is widespread in Japan. An editorial in the *Asahi Evening News* blasted the six-day school week. "More and more schools," the editors observed, "are becoming like forced labor camps to youngsters."

This pressure comes about in part because the best jobs in both the public and private sectors are reserved for those who attend the most prestigious universities, and there is a test at every turn, from kindergarten to Kawasaki. Indeed, test-taking has become a national obsession. At Yoyogi seminar, one of the most popular and profitable of the private "cram schools," more than 400 students in a single room busily scribbled notes from a lecture on English grammar. A poster in the room proudly proclaimed the school's motto: Every Day a Competition.

Reporters at Tokyo's foreign press center openly describe what they see as the paradox between the reputation and the reality of Japanese education. They note, for example, that since 1945, in the combined fields of physics, chemistry, medicine, literature, and economics, the U.S. boasts 139 Nobel laureates to Japan's four.

As a result, the watchwords of school reform in Japan are "individuality," "creativity," and "autonomy." The Japanese want students who will invent robots, not become them. Prime Minister Nakasone's advocacy of these reforms has apparently struck a responsive chord. Last summer, he was elected to an unprecedented third term, signaling, among other things, a popular mandate for his desire to diversify the school system.

So enough Japan worship already. The stifling legislation it has thus far produced here is proof positive that a rising tide of mediocrity threatens to engulf not our schools but those who would reform them instead.

Fortunately for youngsters in the United States, some voices are crying out in the wilderness of education reform. Ernest Boyer, Albert Shanker, Marc Tucker, Theodore Sizer, John Goodlad, Gregory Anrig, and Bill Honig are among those leading the way to real reform. Their solutions are refreshingly student-centered. Their focus is the schoolhouse, not the statehouse. In seeking to put the right information into the right hands, they hope not simply to change an institution, but rather to institutionalize change.

Punitive, burdensome, top-down legislation is a sorry solution to the problems of public schooling, no matter how sanctimonious the rhetoric. Finding ways to make classrooms more engaging for kids should be the goal of education policy makers everywhere. It's only common sense. But, as Horace Mann observed, common sense is not so common. ■

NICHOLAS PALEOLOGOS chairs the Committee on Education of the Massachusetts House of Representatives. Last year he went on a study tour of Japan, sponsored by the National Conference of State Legislatures and the American-Japan Fund.

Australia new favorite of foreign investors

By Reuters News Service

SYDNEY, Australia — Australia has become the "flavor of the month" for foreign investors, who are snapping up stocks, bonds and real estate as currency fluctuations make other countries less attractive.

High short-term interest rates, a bullish stock market and an increasingly stable currency have drawn a massive inflow of funds in the past two months, largely from Japanese and U.S. investors, analysts polled by Reuters said.

Prime choice

Australia is a prime choice for investors wishing to diversify from U.S. dollar instruments as the greenback has tumbled against many currencies, they said. Britain and Canada were other popular choices for investors, they added.

A one percentage point fall in key 10-year bond yields in the past month, record share prices and a 10-month high for the local dollar against the U.S. dollar testify to the influx of foreign funds into Australia.

The Australian dollar is now worth around 71 U.S. cents after averaging about 66 cents in January.

Daily inquiries

Official figures tracing the inflow of capital are not yet available, but brokers said they received almost daily inquiries from Japanese and U.S. investors.

"These people have got trillions of dollars sloshing about and they don't know what to do with it. Some of that is ending up here with the attraction of high interest rates and reasonable currency stability," National Australia Bank Ltd. economist Brian Hamley said.

Bank prime rates are currently as high as 18.5 percent.

"Australia may not be in the best (economic) position, but there aren't too many other countries where you'd want to put your money," Hamley said.

Japanese have taken an interest in Australian real estate, buying the Regent Hotel in Sydney.

Lloyds Bank NZA chief economist Will Buttrose said: "We are looking at a more favored market than perhaps the U.S., where some people would be concerned about the value of the U.S. dollar. Why not put the money in Australia where entry is cheap and the currency looks stable?"

Turning that capital into more permanent productive investment depends on government economic policy, he said.

"Foreign investment will only disappear if people lose confidence in the direction in the economy," Buttrose said. He added that a tough government statement on the economy scheduled for May 14 would be carefully watched by offshore investors.

Investors are eager to see Australia take tough decisions to curb its large foreign debt and stubborn current account deficit, which reached $13.32 billion ($9.8 billion U.S.) in the fiscal year ended last June, he said.

"They are giving us the benefit of the doubt and I think they would like to leave the money here," Buttrose said.

Australia's central bank has been sympathetic to Japanese investors' desire for a stable exchange rate against the yen, the analysts said.

Central bank governor Bob Johnston last week said authorities could not take their "eyes off the yen" when assessing exchange rate policy.

Booming share market

Analysts said the bank had guided the Australian dollar to trade within the range of 100 to 102 yen in recent months.

The booming Australian share market has followed Wall Street and other markets, but is also setting its own trend in response to the weight of both domestic and offshore funds — particularly in the gold sector.

The All Ordinaries Index closed at 1,758.3 Wednesday, nearly 20 percent above its level at the end of 1986, while the gold stocks index has nearly doubled in the same period.

The property sector is also sought after, with Japanese companies which have invested heavily in the United States in recent years turning their sights to undervalued real estate.

Analysts pointed to the sale of Sydney's five-star Regent Hotel to Japanese interests for more than $145 million ($101 million) as indicating the type of property being sought.

Education must be useful — as well as satisfying and enlightening

Garth Boomer
Chairman
Commonwealth
Schools Commission

Some weeks ago at a seminar designed to give business and industry insights into government, Senator John Button decried what he saw as Australia's lack of a *productive culture*. He went on to denounce the mental void of many of our school graduates with respect to business and commerce in Australia. As an educator present at this address, I found myself focussing on the evocative notion of *productive culture*. Although Senator Button was not referring specifically to schools in presenting this notion, I began thinking immediately of the implications for schooling. If Australia is to have a productive culture; if Australia is to regain its former international economic status; then schooling has a major part to play in developing young people with the capacity, individually and collectively, to *produce* in the interests of the nation.

While most educators, including the Commonwealth Schools Commission, have consistently rejected narrowly instrumental notions that schools should prepare children for specific vocational ends, to take their place as units in the workplace, the time has come for those in the education industry to join with all other sectors of society to reconsider the purposes of schooling, to scrutinise content, methods and goals, and to take action which will enhance Australia's long term productivity.

Of course, education has a responsibility to the culture and 'quality of life'. We need citizens who are highly literate, communicative, socially responsible, sensitive and active in artistic endeavours, and generally knowledgeable. A sound general education, *which initiates young people into the culture*, is at the heart of all advanced civilizations but, 'culture' too often is seen as somehow separate from the commerce, exchange, and daily business of life. At the heart of any culture is its economy, its ways of providing for the well being of the people. Education must be predicated on this fundamental conception of culture. Unpalatable as it may be to those who cling to a view of education as an entree to 'sweetness and light', education must be, *and be seen to be*, useful as well as satisfying and enlightening. The interests of individuals must be reconciled with the interests of the nation.

Garth Boomer

Since the late seventies there has been a growing tendency for schools to emerge from the cloisters and to begin talking to parents, employers and other government departments. The movement to reach out to the community has been accelerated by the need to reform senior secondary curricula to take account of a much broader range of clients staying on at school. There is no doubt, however, that the economic troubles facing Australia have acted as a direct spur to educationists to take more seriously the contribution of education to the economy at this time.

It would be fair to say that there has been a certain amount of thrashing about and experiment as schools come to terms with new demands and challenges. It would also be fair to say that there is still a good deal of national confusion, inside and outside education, as to where our schools should be heading. In every state of Australia systems are looking to various kinds of curriculum reform.

A most encouraging new factor is the changing attitude of business and industry to education, on the one hand, and of education to business and industry on the other. The tendency of the late seventies and early eighties was for employers to hurl unsubstantiated cliches at schools (the standards alarms) and for schools to protest that they were misunderstood. Now we find signs, in recent reports such as the Business Council of Australia survey on client perceptions of education, of a more serious and co-operative spirit. Many of the criticisms are still there but the tone of blame and recrimination has changed to expressions of interest in being involved and in offering help.

At the same time both at the school and system level, there are tangible signs of educators reaching out to involve out-of-school interests in discussions about the curriculum. Parent groups, especially, have a key role to play in ensuring that schools continue to engage with their communities. Parents have a central role to play in bridging the gap between school and work.

The Commonwealth Schools

Commission is seeking the input of parents, unions, business, industry and other government departments to its major report on secondary education and youth policy to be published towards the end of 1986. The final report, following extensive consultation, will clarify the purposes of secondary education and define the special role of secondary education within the Government's overall youth policy. It is evident that the success of any youth policy will depend on the quality of the educational foundations laid in schools.

The Curriculum Development Centre has recommended as high priorities new projects on **Curriculum and The World of Work** and **Science for All**, directed at linking schools and society. Projects in mathematics and information technology, already under way, have a strong orientation towards *application* and *use* as opposed to book knowledge. There is a national groundswell in curriculum agencies to develop courses where application and use in society are more strongly emphasised. This does not necessarily mean changing important content and information. It means making greater efforts to show how knowledge connects with the world at large. It means challenging students to push what they know into *use*. It means promoting a *productive culture* in schools.

In discussing curriculum I want to focus on six issues which relate to the question of how to establish this productive culture.

Relevance

Debates on relevance usually focus on whether or not subjects/disciplines are relevant to individual students or groups of students. 'Relevance' in these debates means 'able to be recognised by individuals as pertinent to their present and imagined future lives'. It is easy to see that if schools took relevance in this sense to its logical conclusions there would be different courses for each student, a logistical impossibility. At its worst this concept of relevance leads to courses strongly based in the students' here-and-now which tend to leave the learners trapped within their present reality.

Where relevance is taken to mean 'likely to lead to a particular vocation', a school may try to tailor its courses to what it perceives to be labour market demands. This may give students an illusion of relevance which could be shattered when the labour market changes and yesterday's vogue occupations give way to new requirements. Once again relevance as interpreted in terms of curriculum offerings can be a trap. Who can say what the specific job profile of Australia will be in ten years' time?

I suggest that a more profitable way to look at the curriculum as it relates to both the individual and the nation is to consider not what is presently relevant but rather what is *potentially relatable*. This would mean identifying challenging, potentially powerful information and competences which are *likely* to be of long term general use to individuals and the nation.

It means focussing on *outcomes*. What kind of graduate from our schools will best serve the culture and the economy?

In Prime Minister Hawke's 1986 address to the nation on the economy, the following characteristics of the desired Australian were implicit:

- persistence
- courage and will
- adaptability
- imagination
- enterprise
- efficiency
- know-how
- co-operativeness and team work
- concentration
- technological competence.

These are attributes which are clearly relatable to a wide range of possible economic futures. In teaching any particular subject we can be inculcating these attitudes and capacities.

Simplicity and complexity

This leads to a consideration of efficiency and scope in the curriculum.

One response to changing societal circumstances and an increasing clientele in secondary schools has been to diversify the curriculum in the name of relevance. This has thrown huge resource pressures on systems. There has been a press to bring new technological devices, particularly computers, into schools to try to bring schools up-to-date. New courses, whether in theatre arts or applied electronics require buildings, equipment, and suitably trained teachers. These pressures to diversify come, ironically, at a time of severe budgetary restraint. They also tend to fly in the face of the reality that schools will never be able to be up to date, given the rate of knowledge escalation and technological change.

Another response, based on the view that schools should not strive for relevance (in the narrow sense described above) and facing the fact that, in any case, today's relevance is tomorrow's redundance, might be to develop a more common, simple set of curriculum offerings taught in ways which produce long term potentially relatable general knowledge, attitudes, aptitudes and competencies. This kind of response would also acknowledge the pragmatics of resource limits and the impossibility of covering all worthwhile knowledge.

The school still has to make selections from the present knowledge bank of the culture and might therefore opt for a sensible, balanced set of courses based on a judgement about what all Australian citizens have a right to experience and know about and what the nation requires all its citizens to know and be able to do. Faced with criticisms that it does not offer certain courses a school would respond by arguing that it is teaching for higher order capacities which could be applied at a later date if students decided to take up a particular new discipline.

I must say that, while admiring the virtuosity of some secondary schools in offering myriad choices and pathways, I wonder whether all the effort is really going to pay off either in terms of an individual's future or the well-being of the nation. Certainly, if the diverse courses continue to be taught in ways which leave students dependent and trained, rather than resourceful and educated, I would say that the reform is purely cosmetic. Its major benefits might be in containing student unrest by giving them *choice* and purporting to meet their present needs and interests. Viewed retrospectively by those same students, it may not be seen as a nutritious diet, if it has left them limited in their adaptability.

Whether schools opt for a relatively simple and balanced curriculum, or a 'multiple pathways'

scenario, I would suggest that the economic well-being of the nation depends on reforms in teaching methods rather than subject matter. If we are to develop pro-active, innovative, independent thinkers and doers, we must teach in ways which imbue students with the confidence to apply what they know in new situations.

This means a reconstruing of the ideal traditional classroom, based on transmission of fact rather than research and interpretation: on reception and recitation rather than production and self-evaluation. The productive classroom will have close affinities with the workshop whether in English, mathematics or technical studies.

Hospitality

The term 'inclusive curriculum' has gained in currency over the past twelve months. Whether it will emerge as a useful term or be so variously interpreted as to become flaccid, remains to be seen. The ideas behind it, however, are crucial to the economic future of Australia. A schooling system which engages, supports, and encourages some of its students while failing, alienating, and depressing others is both inefficient and unfair. Who would invest in an industry which so patently wastes its resources? The economic future of Australia depends on the fullest possible development of *all* its resources. A well educated crème de la crème would be rendered highly ineffectual if it had to lead a nation of functionaries with low self-esteem. People who have a low opinion of themselves are not likely to be very productive.

The pedagogical reform which I have advocated must include reforms in *hospitality*. Our schools and classrooms must be organised and conducted in ways which engage and include groups which have, in the past, statistically and actually been poorly served by schooling.

The productive school like the productive society must be built upon a 'fair go' ethic. We are all in it together.

Benign hospitality is not enough. Giving minority groups and the disadvantaged access is necessary but not sufficient. True hospitality will involve continued deliberate, systematic, special attention if discriminatory tendencies of the past are to be redressed and if *all* are to reach the generalisable outcomes outlined above.

The economic productivity of Australia, as in Japan or West Germany, depends on the depth, width and resilience of its human resources. We need a slogan of 'quality and a fair go for all'.

Demand

The famous 'Pygmalion' research of Rosenthal is most pertinent to any discussion about Australia and its economy. Rosenthal demonstrated that there is a clear relationship between what teachers expect and what students produce. That is, students tend to perform as they are perceived. Treat a child as if he or she is stupid and traits of stupidity will begin to manifest. Conversely, attend to the child as intelligent thinker and one's thesis will tend to be confirmed. (There is also, by the way, a clear message for parents in this research.)

Much of the past underachievement of girls, Aborigines, and working class children could be blamed, I suggest, on parents', teachers', and society's attitudes, low expectation, and low demand.

If we expect working class children to be less capable than middle class children our prophecies will be fulfilled.

When all our teachers work from a belief in the educability of all they will persevere to find ways of being demandingly hospitable. In the long term, minority groups and the nation will benefit.

Being successfully, demandingly hospitable means exercising a very delicate art in reaching, for each child, a proper armistice between demand and hospitality.

Production

At the upper end of the secondary school we have been too 'pure' for our economic good. This is because we are still, by and large, offering curricula appropriate to potential university entrants based on university requirements. These requirements validate pure mathematics, pure science and pure English (as in English literature) above application. Looking at the productive culture of senior secondary schools, one would conclude that the work is largely *reproduction* of evidence of knowledge in the written form. 'Can say' is valued over 'can do'; 'can write'; or 'can indicate' (in the case of multiple choice tests), is valued above 'can talk intelligently about'.

It is then, a highly stylised bookish culture. The major technology or tool is writing. The major technical achievement in terms of know-how, is how-to-pass-examinations.

The cost, in terms of attrition and failure to achieve is high, let alone the cost in self esteem.

There is increasing specialisation in activity the closer one approaches to Year 12. The use of alternative media and tools which may have been allowed in earlier years gives way to the monotone of pen and paper.

Some of the values and attitudes listed above may be developed in such a regime. Persistence certainly, is rewarded; so too is concentration. Team work in such a race between individuals is out of the question. Adaptability, enterprise and technological competence would not rate highly in most courses.

The secret of a dynamic, productive culture, it seems to me, is *will* or *intention*.

It is interesting that the West Germans and Japanese seem to have a more highly developed notion of industrial democracy than Australians. Workers, as I understand, in Japan and West Germany are encouraged to develop a corporate loyalty and to identify with the goals and products of the company. Problem solving by workers is encouraged as being in the interests of the overall efficiency and effectiveness of the company. Skill is not seen as a static achievement. Workers are continually learning through exchange and on-the-job re-training. Workers are more *willing* to work, *intend* to work and know what they are producing and for what purposes.

Applied to the classroom, the notion of industrial democracy yields a range of very useful suggestions. It would indicate the need for teachers to negotiate with students: for students individually and in groups, to make contracts: for co-operative establishment of criteria for assessing products: and for class contribution to curriculum reform.

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Education must be useful — as well as satisfying and enlightening

In the more progressive of our schools this kind of productive/co-operative regime is being established but at great cost in terms of struggle and energy because society continues to press for a credentialling system which does not value productive capacity.

Politicians, employers, parents and teachers need, *in concert*, to realise that the economic future of Australia is jeopardised by a deeply entrenched examining system that is sadly, anachronistically inadequate.

Credentialling

The Latin verb 'credo', to believe, is at the root of 'credentialling'. Credentials tell us, or purport to tell us, what we are to believe about a student.

The present most highly developed credential, the HSC, matriculation or Tertiary Entrance Score, does not tell us much about 'can do', or 'can produce' except to say that this student 'can handle school', 'can pass examinations' and 'can understand certain concepts'.

It cannot tell us what we are to believe about the range of attributes that Mr Hawke would have the nation inherit.

New forms of evaluating student productivity need to be instituted. These forms wait in the wings under the banners of 'goal-based assessment', 'work-required assessment' and 'negotiated criteria' but fear, ignorance, and certain vested interests ensure that the old examining ways remain paramount. The fear is that standards will drop if schools develop alternative assessment procedures. The ignorance is about just how bankrupt of meaning norm-referenced, scaled marks really are. The vested interests are those who find the tertiary entrance score a convenient sorting device for different purposes.

Without reforms to extend the range of methods of assessment to encompass evaluation of the students' productive capacity in talk, manipulation of various media, and in construction, using wood, metal and plastic, the vision of a productive culture will remain elusive.

Conclusion

In taking up Senator Button's challenge about productive culture we are by no means starting from scratch.

There are promising initiatives occurring around Australia at present. The **Participation and Equity Program** has had a remarkable influence in supporting curriculum reform; credentialling agencies are making promising changes and are beginning to accredit courses requiring student enterprise and production.

The Commonwealth Schools Commission and the Curriculum Development Centre have a significant role to play, working both within the education sector and beyond it with groups, such as parent organisations, to make known the kinds of educational structures and practices which will contribute to national well-being and prosperity.

In addition to this role, the Commonwealth and state governments have undertaken a number of initiatives which will yield national benefits.

The interim national policy on the education of girls recently approved in principle by the Australian Education Council will bring together systems throughout Australia to address equity issues and issues of educational outcomes for girls. It is clear that the resources of Australia's women have often been overlooked and undervalued. The national policy will draw attention to past deficiencies and lead to action to overcome them.

A national task force on disadvantaged schools is looking, amongst other things, at developing objectives and processes which will lead to curriculum reforms and a more concerted and deliberate drive in schools to improve the educational achievement of children disadvantaged through poor economic circumstances.

In terms of curriculum development, the national **Mathematics Curriculum and Teaching Project**, is collecting resource materials which will help teachers to link mathematics with its use in society. Similarly, as mentioned, the developing project, **Science for All**, will have a strong orientation towards *application*.

Perhaps the most significant new work of the Commission is in the area of credentialling, which, I have suggested, is a crucial element in any reforms towards productivity. In 1985, the Curriculum Development Centre produced a national survey of certification in upper secondary education. This has been followed up by a project of national significance in which heads of each major credentialling agency in Australia are investigating the effects of tertiary pre-requisites on courses in the senior secondary school.

All these initiatives point to a growing realisation that, in order to come to terms with pressing challenges to education, as it relates both to the culture and the economy, a *national* effort is needed. The abiding key issues flow across all state boundaries and, at this time of limited resources, co-operative endeavours make sound strategic, economic, and educational sense.

In this respect, the forthcoming report by the Commission on secondary education and youth policy, will bring together advice collected through intensive wide ranging consultations to provide a national focus on the major problems to be addressed. In doing this, the Commission will recommend on how Commonwealth programs can follow through on the advances already made through the **Participation and Equity Program** and other specific purpose programs.

The parents of Australia have a most important partnership role to play in the work; at the school level, through their councils and committees; at the system level, through their federations and associations; and nationally through the Australian Council of State School Organisations and the Australian Parents' Council. The quality of our emerging solutions will depend on the quality of shared understandings between teachers, parents and the wider community about the educational foundations most likely to ensure individual well-being and national prosperity.

July Elections Pose Uncertainties for Australian Colleges and Universities

By GEOFFREY MASLEN

MELBOURNE

When Australians vote for a new government on July 11, advocates of higher education may find it difficult to choose the best political party for their cause.

The governing Labor Party, which has increased federal funds for colleges and universities every year since its election in 1983, has proposed a decrease in such expenditures next year.

Meanwhile, the Liberal Party—the main conservative opposition—is advocating a "free market" approach in which at least 20 per cent of the federal higher-education budget would be set aside for scholarships that students could use at institutions of their choosing.

The idea has hardly been the subject of widespread endorsements by organizations representing Australian colleges and universities.

Prime Minister Bob Hawke decided to schedule next month's election earlier than had been expected, in part because of internal bickering among the conservatives—the Liberals and the weaker National Party. Opinion polls showed that the Labor Party, running on a record of economic management, was likely to win by a margin of 5 to 8 per cent.

In addition, Mr. Hawke found that his party's plan to curtail government spending in the face of huge deficits did not generate much public opposition.

1.6-Pct. Cut Envisioned

For higher education, the plan envisions reducing this year's $2.3-billion (Australian) budget by 1.6 per cent over the next two years. In contrast, inflation-adjusted spending for higher education was increased 8 per cent over the past four years, including a 2.6-per-cent gain in 1986-87 .

The plan would make a proportionately

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REUTERS/BETTMANN NEWSPHOTOS

Australia's Prime Minister Bob Hawke advocates a 1.6-per-cent cut in higher-education spending.

Australian Elections Pose Uncertainties for Colleges and Universities

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larger cut in federal funds for so-called TAFE colleges—institutions that provide "technical and further [adult] education." They would lose nearly 10 per cent of some $315-million that has been earmarked mainly for capital expenditures, over the next two years.

Increase in Demand

The cuts have been proposed despite a substantial increase in the demand for higher education here. An estimated 20,000 students were turned away from universities or colleges of advanced education this year, government data indicate, and perhaps as many as 100,000 failed to get a place in TAFE colleges.

The government has also decided to replace unemployment benefits worth about $85 a week for 16- and 17 year-olds who leave school to look for work. Instead, the government will provide $25-a-week "job-search allowances."

About 60,000 Australians in that age group leave school each year, the government says, and one in four 15- to 19-year-olds seeking work does not find it—an unemployment rate three times the national average.

Education Minister Susan Ryan, indicating that the government would monitor the effects of the government's spending proposals on young people, said Australia's system of postsecondary education—especially the TAFE colleges—needed to be expanded. It remains to be seen whether her views will persuade Mr. Hawke to add funds for higher education.

The conservatives' free-market plan was described in policy statements last month. It called for giving colleges and universities more authority over such matters as admissions, staffing, the determination of their academic emphases, and planning. Conservatives said that would enable institutions to satisfy educational demands more effectively.

The Liberal Party said the proposed set-asides for scholarships would give students "much wider opportunities for entry to higher education and a much greater influence over the shape of institutional offerings."

Priority to Scholarship Students

The plan would require institutions to give priority to scholarship holders, who would be selected under a new system of assessment. Individual institutions would be free to decide whether to scrap, maintain, or increase a controversial $250 administration fee introduced by the Hawke government this year at all institutions. Previously, higher education was virtually free for all Australian students.

Many students were afraid the fee would be raised, but Ms. Ryan promised that it would go up only to keep pace with increases in the cost of living.

The Chronicle of Higher Education

"Tough Economic Forecast for Australian Graduates," from The Chronicle of Higher Education

In Australia, meanwhile, many young people from lower-income families are likely to have a lot of trouble finding work in the next few decades.

Based on a 10-year study, Trevor Williams of the Australian Research Council has predicted that half the Australians now in school will not complete secondary school, 40 per cent will not go on to a college or university, and only 10 per cent will graduate from a postsecondary institution.

Contrary to government claims that all Australians have an equal chance to receive an education, the nation's education system favors children from wealthier, better-educated families, the ongoing study indicated. Children from poor families were only half as likely as those from wealthy families to get a college or university education, the study found.